

would increase the budget pressures on agriculture in any future budget reconciliation efforts.

"Farmers will continue to push for the tax reform measures included in the stalled budget reconciliation measure," Kleckner said. "Securing an increase in the estate tax exemption and a decrease in the capital gains tax rate are as important to the agriculture economy as nailing down a sensible farm bill. We will continue to highlight the importance of those tax measures as the budget debate continues, but America's farmers need a farm bill now. AFBF and state Farm Bureaus will be making a concerted push in Washington, D.C. and at home in the coming weeks, during Congress' ill-timed February recess."

[From the Omaha World Herald, Jan. 26, 1996]

FARM BUREAU TRIES TO FREE MIRE D FARM BILL

(By David C. Beeder)

WASHINGTON.—Members of the American Farm Bureau Federation are seeking immediate action on farm legislation that has been stalled along with the balanced-budget bill. Farm Bureau President Dean Kleckner said Thursday.

Kleckner said the 4.5 million-member Farm Bureau, the country's largest agricultural organization, has started working in every congressional district to urge House and Senate members to separate farm legislation from the long-delayed budget bill.

"Our intention now is to lead the charge in getting a farm bill passed as soon as possible," said Kleckner, a farmer from Rudd, Iowa. "Spring planting season in many Southern states is just around the corner."

Without farm legislation, some farmers are finding it difficult to borrow money, Kleckner said.

A stand-alone farm bill introduced by Rep. Pat Roberts, a Republican from Kansas who heads the House Agriculture Committee, would allocate \$44 billion over seven years to make declining annual payments to farmers based on subsidies they received in the past.

The Roberts bill, co-sponsored by Rep. Bill Barrett, R-Neb., would eliminate acreage restrictions and a requirement that farmers grow the same crop year after year to qualify for payments. Farmers could plant any crop, or no crop, under the bill.

Kleckner said everyone involved in U.S. agriculture recognizes that "declining payments are a fact of life we will have to live with."

However, he said, "My gut feeling is there will always be payments made on agriculture. They may not be related to crop production. They may be made for environmental reasons."

The Roberts-Barrett bill has run into opposition in the Senate.

Opponents include Sens. Tom Daschle, D-S.D., the minority leader, Byron Dorgan, D-N.D., Bob Kerrey, D-Neb., J.J. Exon, D-Neb., and Tom Harkin, D-Iowa.

"I have heard some members of Congress say the bill would pass over their dead bodies," Kleckner said, "If there is no farm bill, there will be a lot of dead bodies."

Mr. HARKIN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I have another matter on which I wish to speak, but I want to thank the Senator from Nebraska for bringing this issue

to the floor. For the life of me, I cannot understand why we do not have a farm bill this year. We passed a farm bill out of the Senate Agriculture Committee. It was not what I wanted. But we had our votes, we debated it. Yet, we never brought it on the Senate floor to debate and vote on it. Never. Here it is, almost February 1996, and farmers in our area do not know what to do, how much credit to apply for, or what seed to buy, or what kind of program we are going to have this year. Then listening to the Senator from Nebraska repeat the rapid changes in the national president, or chairman, whatever his position is, of the Farm Bureau, is disconcerting at best.

The Senator from Nebraska, if I understand this right, said that as recently as a month ago, the leader of the Farm Bureau was saying in a letter that was written publicly, I guess, that the Farm Bureau was in favor of a farm program that would have some connection between commodity programs and support prices, and that they were in favor of a program that would support farmers in years when prices were low, but not necessarily when prices are high. Was that just a month ago, I ask the Senator?

Mr. EXON. I believe the date was November 6, maybe 60 days ago. The time-frame may be a little over a month. But the Senator is absolutely correct, regardless of the date, there was a dramatic change overnight, without any explanation from the Farm Bureau of being against the program they are now for, and that boggles my mind.

Mr. HARKIN. I add, on the Agriculture Committee last summer—and I forget the exact date—the same individual, the president of the American Farm Bureau, was before our committee. Then we were talking about the budget, of which the distinguished Senator from Nebraska knows a lot, since he is a ranking member on our Budget Committee. I was asking him about the budget. I said that the Clinton budget cuts about—I think at that time it was around \$4 billion, over a period, from agriculture, and I think the House budget cut something like \$13 billion or \$14 billion from agriculture. I asked him, "Given those two options, which would you prefer? Which would the Farm Bureau be for?" He said they would prefer the Clinton budget.

Now it seems like there is another big turnaround where they want this so-called freedom to farm bill, which, as the Senator said, is really the farm welfare bill. I do not know how anyone could ask us to pass a bill that would give a Government check to a farmer when prices were extremely high in the marketplace. But that is what they are asking for. It is a siren song for farmers. If they buy into that, in a few years there will not be any farm program or any farm bill at all to protect them when prices are low. I thank the Senator for bringing this up.

Mr. EXON. If the Senator will yield for a minute—

Mr. HARKIN. Yes. I yield.

Mr. EXON. My friend has been at the forefront of workable farm programs for a long time. I am as mystified as he is. To build upon what the Senator just said, I placed in the RECORD the other day the farm welfare program, the so-called Freedom to Farm Act. It would provide a massive amount, thousands of dollars a year, to a farmer whether or not the farmer even planted, on one hand, and he would get the same amount of thousands of dollars—I figured out that a typical farm of 500 acres, a corn farmer, at \$3.10 a bushel, under the Freedom to Farm Act, even though that farmer at 500 acres, 120 bushels return, which is somewhere near normal—

Mr. HARKIN. We get more than that in Iowa.

Mr. EXON. It would be \$186,000 gross income the farmer would make. That is gross, not net. But on top of that \$186,000, that particular farmer would receive a check of about \$16,000. Or, I might add, if the price of corn went up to \$4 a bushel, he would still get the \$26,000, or at \$5 a bushel, the farmer would get the \$26,000; or if the farmer did not want to do anything and just sit home and watch television and surf the channels and not even go out and plant, he still gets \$26,000 from the Federal Government.

If that is not a form of welfare—as I said in my remarks, once the Sun shines in on that, once the members of the Farm Bureau realize and recognize that their leadership is trying to convert a farm program based on production that supports them when prices are low but does not support them when they are getting \$3.10 a bushel, there is going to be a revolution in the Farm Bureau. There is also going to be, what is more serious, a revolution that the Senator from Iowa commented on when the people of the United States and the Members of the House of Representatives and U.S. Senate recognize that you are throwing that kind of money away, regardless of what the price of corn is, even at \$5 a bushel, you get it whether or not you earn it, and that is welfare.

Mr. HARKIN. I thank the Senator from Nebraska. I compliment him. He has been a great leader in agriculture. I am going to miss his leadership in the years to come on the Senate floor.

REDUCING NUCLEAR TENSIONS IN THE WORLD

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I rise on a matter of great concern to me and all those who are concerned about reducing nuclear tensions in the world, who are concerned about nonproliferation, and who are in favor of and concerned about a comprehensive test ban treaty. I might point out that in the State of the Union Message last Tuesday, President Clinton said that one of the things he wanted to accomplish was a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty.

Most experts agree that nowhere on Earth is the potential for a nuclear